

Turning Point: The Newsletter of



Citizens United for
Rehabilitation of Errants

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From the Chair

by Hedy Harden

Kim Gardner, Pride of St. Louis

A couple of years ago when Keith started talking about Philadelphia reform-Prosecutor Larry Krasner and Activist Shaun King's Real Justice movement to support reform-minded prosecutors, I agreed that prosecutors have the most power and that reform was badly needed. But privately I felt the chances of changing the status quo in these days were slim to none. In fact, I thought we in CURE should focus more on the plight of prisoners themselves when planning our annual conferences.

Keith educated me about Kansas prosecutor Mark DuPree in Wyandotte County and his Conviction Integrity Unit.

I did read up on Shaun King's ideas and learned more about the movement, but I really didn't get enthused until prosecutorial reform came to St. Louis in the form of Kim Gardner and Wesley Bell.

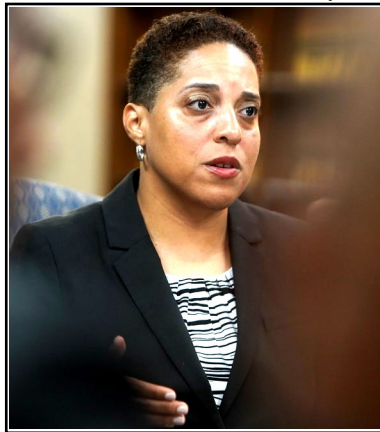
St. Louis County Prosecutor Wesley Bell, straight outta Ferguson, has been in the limelight with exciting new leadership and innovative practices. And then there's St. Louis Circuit Attorney Kim Gardner.

Gardner has smashed into the local psyche with her radical changes and fighting spirit. It's no surprise that a black woman fighting for righteous change is under constant attack by racist elements and those who want to maintain the status quo. The more I read and hear about her, the more amazed I become. How can one person accomplish so much? Take a look at some of her achievements:

Kimberly Gardner took office January 16, 2017 as the first black circuit attorney in St. Louis. She has removed or reduced cash bond for minor non-felonies. She consults with the Vera Institute, and does not prose-

cute low-level marijuana possession. In fact, police sought 7,045 felony cases in 2019; Gardner only prosecuted 1,641.

She shares a federal grant with the Midwest Innocence Project on wrongful convictions. Gardner has created an **Exclusion list**—as of summer 2018, 288 St. Louis cops were deemed so tainted by misconduct that she will not accept their cases. From around the country, 55 prosecutors and law enforcement officials signed a statement in support of her decision.



In February 2019 Gardner's Conviction Integrity Unit started investigating past cases of dirty cops. She brought the Lamar Johnson case into the limelight when she sought a new trial for Johnson, who has been incarcerated more than 24 years, although obviously innocent. We published a lengthy article

about his railroading by corrupt cops in last summer's Turning Point.

Gardner has a **felony diversion program** for young first-time offenders, which is a rigorous year-long program meant to address the harm caused by mass incarceration and reduce crime. In 2019, 241 people were accepted into the redirect program, and 149 have completed it.

Designed by experts at Washington University, Florida State U., and St. Louis U., the program allows young nonviolent felony offenders with little or no criminal history to enter an intensive regimen of cognitive-behavioral therapy, classes in life skills, job training and employment, and community service. Her mentors, many former prisoners with street experience, work in Gardner's office. These include Darren Seals, who founded the Sankofa Unity Center and mentoring program in Walnut Park.

Gardner also started an **Opioid addiction**

Winter 2019-2020

Inside this issue:

Madiba	2
You Inspire Me	2
KC CURE Outreach Committee	2
Research Project Targets MCC	3
Bruce Franks' Oscar Film	4
Justice Beat	4
Pope Touts Prison Reform	4
EnoughIsEnough2020	5
Turning Point	5
DOC Downsizing	5
Dragon Lady meets Godzilla	6
2020 Criminal Justice Bills	7
Black History Month	8
Winter Activities	9
Photo from OBS 40th AC	9
Lamar Johnson Update	10
Lonnie Lockhart Bey: Proposed Bill and article	11
Thank you!	12

education program, which is a 4-week supervised course on drug safety. These are individuals ineligible for the 22nd Circuit's treatment court (formerly drug court).

"We found that if we give individuals more options, they feel like they have control of their life, and they're more likely to seek outside, community-based treatment," said Gardner.

"We have to stop having this rhetoric that we're going to lock our way out of this. That simply cannot be our strategy for crime reduction. It does not work. And

See *Pride* page 10

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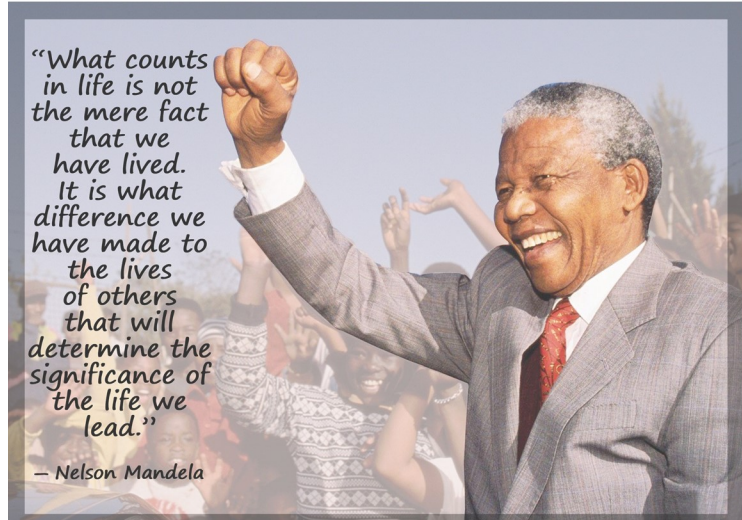
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Turning Point Editor: Hedy Harden

Webmaster: Clare Petersen



You Inspire Me

*I don't need to mention names
 You know who you are
 On top one minute, doing what you do so well
 Then knocked down and shut away
 Unseen but not forgotten
 Still fighting with dignity day after day
 Not even bemoaning your fate
 Taking whatever opportunity life affords
 To continue the struggle
 Still planning creative strategies
 to make change happen
 Undeterred by the oppression of centuries
 The lowest of the low in some eyes
 The highest of the high in mine. ♦*

CURE is *NOT* a service organization. We are an all-volunteer non-profit criminal justice advocacy organization. CURE has NO legal services—please do NOT send legal papers. We advocate for criminal justice reform, but we cannot take on individual cases.

Mission Statement

CURE believes that prisons should be only for those who MUST be incarcerated and that prisons should only exist for the purposes of education and rehabilitation. CURE is a membership organization. We work hard to provide our members with the information and tools necessary to help them understand the criminal justice system and to advocate for positive change.



New KC CURE Committee:

At our KC CURE meeting Feb. 17, an Outreach Committee was formed. Members include (standing) Penrod (Edward Pennington), Mo (Maureen Flynn), and Willie Copher. Lower level: Rev. Ester Holzendorf and Keith Brown El. The group has been meeting regularly. ♦

Research Project Focuses on Moberly CC *by Hedy Harden*

Last September I received a request from Alana Boyles to endorse a grant request for DOC. They were applying to the Urban Institute in Washington DC for a grant to fund a new program to be piloted at Moberly Correctional Center. We in CURE didn't have a problem with it, so we signed on.

Then, on February 19, I received an invitation from Jack McCleary, the MODOC Grant Administrator, to attend a Community Engagement Lunch on Tuesday, February 25 at the University Of Missouri School Of Social Work in Columbia.

A group called Prison Research & Innovation Network (PRIN) planned to meet there with community advocates. Missouri and four other states had received grants from the Urban Institute to create the Network, whose purpose is to improve transparency and accountability and to make prison environments more humane and rehabilitative.

Keith and I decided to attend, him driving from Kansas City and me from St. Louis.

The meeting included researchers from the University of Missouri (Columbia, St. Louis and Kansas City campuses) as well as representatives from the Urban Institute, Arnold Ventures, the Missouri DOC, Missouri CURE, and a couple of VICs from Moberly.

Ronald Day is a former prisoner and vice president of the Fortune Society, a New York non-profit group that aims to better integrate former prisoners into society. He said that this project is the first of its kind throughout the United States. "It's never been anywhere in the country, when you talk about going into the prisons and understanding more about the prison environment, including people who are incarcerated as well as those who work in the institutions. It hasn't been done," Day said. "That's why we're interested in bringing people together to hear their voices, concerns and cynicism."

"We're trying to better understand the conditions and climate of prisons," said Will Engelhardt with the Urban

Institute. Besides Missouri, Iowa, Delaware, Colorado and Vermont are taking part in the program. All have committed to making changes based on the research findings, he said.

"We recognize that there is a lot that needs to be improved here in Mis-



souri corrections," said Nancy Lavine with the Urban Institute. "It's important to note that the leadership wants this and recognizes that opening up your doors to research is a risky thing."

The day before, the group had toured MCC, where they got a first-hand look at conditions in the prison and learned what rehabilitation programs are offered.

According to an article in the Moberly Monitor, "One of the key differences between Monday's tour and Tuesday's meeting was direct input from volunteers at the Moberly prison and representatives from Missouri CURE, an inmate advocacy group. It gave researchers a chance to form early ideas for appropriate survey questions and interview strategies with staff and offenders."

"We use community-based participatory research," said Kelli Canada, associate professor and associate director for research at the MU School of Social Work. "That just means we come in and try to understand information from the perspective of those who are experts in that space. That's not us, that's the people who live and work in those spaces."

The Moberly prison houses about 1,800 prisoners. The next step of the project will be to develop a survey and figure out what questions will need to be asked of each stakeholder, which Engelhardt said could present challenges.

John Quinn, Moberly's inmate ac-

tivity coordinator, suggested having former prisoners speak to the current offenders in the Moberly prison in order to more easily gain their trust and convince them to participate in the research.

Keith noted that the research project has been a long time coming. "I think

Missouri probably has one of the worst penal systems anywhere in the United States," he said. "I wish this could have begun a whole lot sooner, but the mindset that you have in the staff at some of these penal institutions is not conducive to welcoming peo-

ple into their environment. They want everything that they do to be kept behind closed doors."

Brown-El suggested that researchers compile data about the number of infractions written up by prison staff and how many of those lead to offenders being locked up in segregation. He suggested that some of the segregation cells be repurposed as general population.

Karen Pojmann, MODOC spokesperson, said that Director Anne Precythe is monitoring the situation and looking at ways to reduce the number of segregation cells.

Keith also noted that MODOC had censored one of our newsletters recently, claiming that the content could cause hatred and violence among the prisoner population, yet they would not say what part of the 12-page newsletter was being targeted. Pojmann spoke up again, saying she'd like to talk with Keith about that, implying she could help resolve the issue.

The project will include hiring a full-time "innovation manager", who will handle the day-to-day operations of the project at MCC. An executive committee will be formed that could include legislators, former inmates, DOC employees, staff members from the governor's office and community members.

Missouri CURE welcomes the light being shined on prison conditions, although we would have preferred the focus to be on maximum security where it is sorely needed. We urge prisoners at MCC to cooperate with the project in hopes of making things better for all Missouri prisoners. ♦



St. Louis Superman gets Oscar Nomination

“St. Louis Superman,” the 25-minute film about former State Rep. Bruce Franks Jr., was nominated for an Academy Award as Best Documentary Short Subject Oscar.

When Bruce received word on January 13th, he “jumped across the room,” he said. “I was yelling. I was happy. I was screaming. I was so excited. I was pumped. And then I just started crying. Because I remember where I was a year ago, and I remember in my head it was better off for me not to be on this earth. And a year later, we are nominated for an Oscar. I’m healthy. I’m doing well. Life is good.”



Franks said he hopes that the nomination sends a message of hope to St. Louis residents who have struggled.

“When you see hope and you see hope that looks like you, that comes from where you come from, that resonates with you, that feels like you—that hope is what’s going to be inspirational,” he said.

“We tell young people all the time that come from my community that it’s a big world and you can do it—but we don’t actually show them. And I think this is a way of showing them that there is hope.”

When asked if he plans to attend the Academy Awards ceremony, Franks replied, “Oh, hell yeah.”

“I don’t feel like it’s me there. I feel like the whole of St. Louis is there...everybody who shut down a highway, got pepper sprayed, tear gassed, everybody who stood in the rain to vote for me, everybody who ever stood for anything—and not just in St. Louis—with us being in the building, we will all be there.”

St. Louis Public Radio 1/13/2020 and the St. Louis American ♦



Something NEW in the Lou

The Justice Beat Talk held its first official broadcast, live-streamed via Facebook Live at www.facebook.com/justicebeat2day, on Saturday, February 1, 2020 from 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. CST; It will be aired every Saturday thereafter.

Angelika

Mueller-Rowry and Hedy Harden of Missouri CURE were interviewed on Justice Beat February 15 regarding prison medical issues.

The show’s host, creator and Executive Producer, Elaine Mbionwu, said, “Our mission is to inform, educate, empower, and motivate our listening audience to act!

Although live-streamed via Facebook Live, The Justice Beat Talk Show is also formally registered with the National Association of Digital Broadcasters (NAdB) and its call-letters are WJBR.

“Our primary goal is to discuss what matters to you – **Justice Reform**, said Mbionwu. We anticipate that this venue will increase and expand our outreach to the **1 in 3 touched by incarceration** in a way that transforms the justice reform landscape in a progressive, powerful, and impactful way. ♦



Pope Francis on Prisons

Speaking November 8, 2019, Pope Francis urged greater efforts to reform prison systems, address the root causes of crime and ensure acceptance and reintegration once a person completes his or her sentence.

“It is easier to repress than to educate and, I would say, it is more comfortable too,” Pope Francis told the group. “Denying the injustice present in society and creating these spaces to put offenders is easier than offering equal development opportunities to all citizens.”

“The aim of a prison sentence should be to educate and prepare people to return eventually to society as law-abiding and contributing citizens, he said, but that often is not the case because of a lack of “resources to address the social, psychological and family problems experienced by detainees.”

“You cannot talk about paying a debt to society from a jail cell without windows,” Pope Francis said. “There is no humane punishment without a horizon. No one can change their life if they don’t see a horizon.”

A related area that requires much more attention from the church and its members, he said, is helping people after they have been released from prison.

“Often when leaving prison, the person finds himself in a world that is alien to him and that does not recognize him as trustworthy, even excluding him from the possibility of working to obtain a decent livelihood,” the pope said. “By preventing people from regaining the full exercise of their dignity,” they are exposed again to the lack of opportunity that often contributed to their committing a crime in the first place. ♦



EnoughIsEnough2020.org

Fight Mass Incarceration; restore families

Most Missouri prisoners and their loved ones are well aware of the problems associated with the 85% law requiring violent or dangerous offenders to serve at least 85% of their sentences before being eligible for parole consideration. The 1994 so-called Truth in Sentencing legislation that sought to be tough on crime led to an unheard of prison-building boom throughout the country and in the State of Missouri. It has also left in its wake thousands upon thousands of prisoners and their families victimized by the harsh penalties inflicted by the legislation.

Even George Lombardi, who led the Missouri DOC for 30 years, agreed that more people convicted of dangerous felonies should be released. "For the most part," he said, they "will not re-offend."

Studies have shown that those convicted of dangerous felonies re-offend at much lower rates than others on parole. Of 860 murderers paroled between 1990 and 2010 tracked by Stanford University, only five committed new crimes and none of the new crimes were murder.

It's time for a change, and

EnoughIsEnough2020 is ready to institute that change. We believe it is time for Missouri politicians to stop using fear-mongering to justify their imperfect prison-for-profit criminal justice system. Furthermore, it is time for the public to stop falling for it and help us make the needed changes

EnoughIs

Enough 2020 is tired of hearing these facts about the criminal justice system and seeing no intelligent change in policy made by Missouri legislators. So now we, the actual people of Missouri, are initiating the needed

change. We are families of all creeds affected by our men and women being kept from us too long. Enough is enough. Other states who adopted a version of the 85% law have already gotten rid of it. It's our turn. And waiting on Missouri's legislature to do it is unreasonable at this point.

If you have a loved one who has been serving a sentence under the 85% law, help bring them home sooner. Those persons who are not career criminals are better off at home helping their families and communities.

This is an initiative petition. People are needed to collect signatures for this ballot initiative. Please go to the website **EnoughIsEnough 2020.org**.

Call 314-384-6774 to obtain forms or for more information. ♦



Turning Point by Hedy Harden

Summer 2019 Newsletter:

More than 2 months after we mailed out the Summer 2019 newsletter, we received a letter from Jeff Norman saying it was being censored. He specifically mentioned FCC. As usual, we were not informed as to what part of the 12-page newsletter was found offensive. We were given 30 days to appeal to the Director of Adult Institutions (DAI), which at that time was Alana Boyles.

Alana had given me her card with her cell phone number and had invited me to call her, so that's what I did. She told me she would check it out and get back to me. About a week later I found a letter from her supporting the censorship. Shortly thereafter I heard she had been asked to resign.

Keith wrote a letter to Director Precythe, formally appealing the censorship. He received a response from Ryan Crews as "acting DAI", simply reiterating what had been done.

On our behalf, the First Amendment Law Clinic at Washington University initiated a sunshine request for information which was sent on or about January 27, 2020. When a response was not received on time, another request was sent on March 4. There was no response when this newsletter went to print.

Autumn 2019 newsletter:

The mail house used by our printing company once again mailed the newsletter out without registry numbers. Some people received the newsletter but many did not. We had them re-printed and sent out again, which is why some of you received duplicate copies. The mail house is no longer being used. ♦

DOC Downsizing

According to the Jan. 20, 2020 Post-Dispatch, Gov. Parson is calling for more downsizing in the DOC. In 2017, the prison population was a reported **33,000**, while it now stands at **26,000**.

Changes in the criminal code are responsible for more people being sentenced to probation instead of incarceration, according to state officials.

Instead of looking at possibly building two additional prisons 3 years ago, Missouri has closed one prison and is closing housing units in several more facilities. With a total of 20 prisons, Parson is announcing closing wings in Tipton, Algoa, Farmington, Bowling Green and St. Joseph (WRDCC).

DOC expects the change to remove 1,756 prisoner beds and eliminate 131 vacant full time positions.

"Closing housing units reduces staffing needs and enables the department to more effectively and efficiently staff facilities, boost safety and reduce mandatory overtime. We're hoping these changes also can reduce staff stress and improve retention," said DOC Spokeswoman Karen Pojmann.

Instead of a previously expected bill of \$189 million to add cells, the current plan is expected to save some \$6.5 million and eliminate more than \$6 million in pending maintenance and repair projects.



Meanwhile Gov. Parson's campaign ads on TV paint him as tough on crime, especially violent crime—but that's life in an election year. ♦

Dragon Lady Meets Godzilla

by Keith Brown El

Our prisoner health coordinator Angelika Mueller-Rowry (Angie) is always looking for ways to fight for better healthcare for Missouri prisoners. When she found “Justice 4 Inmate’s” on Facebook, she hooked up with them, despite their different approach to addressing prison healthcare problems. Angie spread the word to CURE members and others to visit and like their site. A rural group, J4I’s main issue is prison healthcare.

When J4I announced plans to have a rally in the Capitol on January 23, Angie began working with them and CURE became a co-sponsor, recruiting others to attend. She prepared a CURE press release and sent a letter and other information to lawmakers regarding prisoner health.

On January 23 twelve people (7 of them from CURE) showed up at the Capitol, but none of the legislators were there that day, supposedly because of the weather. A couple of reporters did interviews, and photos were taken. Denise Ward-Brown, a media professor at Washington University, conducted video interviews.

Afterwards, J4I’s Victoria Ferguson claimed that Angie had introduced race and politics into the mix. She stated that Angie had not done anything for inmates

and accused her of “race-baiting” when Angie tried to post her deceased husband’s and her cousin-in-law’s stories.

Ferguson wrote to our Chairperson Hedy Harden, calling Angie a “fraud,” saying that Hedy was responsible for what Angie does, and that she should rein Angie in or face being put “on blast.”

When Hedy didn’t respond, Ferguson started posting outright lies and making derogatory statements about Missouri

CURE and Hedy on J4I’s site.

First she claimed that Hedy used “inmate money” generated through Missouri CURE to purchase a Cadillac. The only Cadillac

Ms. Harden has ever owned was purchased more than 50 years ago. She wasn’t involved in any kind of dealings with prisoners back then. In fact, CURE didn’t even exist at that time anywhere on the planet. Next, J4I claimed that Missouri CURE’s non-profit status was revoked by the state. This is another outright lie. Our non-profit status was never revoked. It momentarily lapsed due to the failure of one of our volunteers to renew it. As soon as we discovered the problem, we got it re-instated immediately.

I don’t know who this Victoria Ferguson who runs J4I thinks she is, but she

has even gone so far as to assert that we “live large” on grant money, demanding to see what we use it for.

That is none of Ferguson’s business. CURE does not answer to or take orders from her. And she will not dictate to us how we run our organization.

For the record, none of the money that Missouri CURE receives, whether dues, donations or

grants, has ever been used for anything other than Missouri CURE purposes, which are to benefit prisoners and their loved ones.

CURE is a worldwide organization. Missouri CURE has been around for 30 years, and we are known and respected around the country. People familiar with CURE know how dedicated we are and what we do.

Ferguson prides herself on having a Nickname of, “Dragon Lady” that she somehow acquired.

Well, Dragon Lady, you are about to meet Godzilla. This kind of work is difficult enough, and many people in society already think the worst that can possibly be thought about people who are incarcerated. Prisoners don’t need people like you being a spokesperson for their cause—people who are proven liars and backstabbers instead of someone having a genuine interest in building alliances for a common cause.

There is no doubt that society is getting fed up with business as usual in the prison system. As a result many are now ready to embrace criminal justice reform. This, however, also creates opportunities for those who are willing to resort to lies, distortions and misrepresentations of facts to try and undermine the good work being done by legitimate groups and individuals. These are tactics used by agent provocateurs (groups, organizations and individuals created and trained by government agents to destabilize and destroy legitimate organizations and individuals).

It is a crime in Missouri and all over the country to knowingly or recklessly publish lies about someone for the purpose of damaging their reputation. It is obvious that this is what Ferguson and J4I have done. Missouri CURE will not waste time arguing and exchanging insults with this group on Facebook. I strongly advise that they discontinue what they are doing before Ferguson and the rest of her group find themselves in court facing a lawsuit to which there is absolutely no defense.

NOTE: J4I posted that some prisoners had complained that CURE didn’t answer their letters. Anyone who may have written us and not received a reply—sorry, but we get tons of mail from prisoners and we just can’t answer every letter. However, if you don’t get an answer from us, it does not mean that whatever you wrote us about is not being addressed. ♦



Ester Noldon of Ladies of Peace with CURE members Shelby Day, James Shelby, Angelika Mueller-Rowry and Tadar Wazir at the Capitol January 23 (Renese Drake and Denise Ward-Brown not pictured)



2020 Criminal Justice Bills of Interest *(updated 3/7/20)*

House Bills

HB 1277, 2450, SB635 Abolish the death penalty

HB 1289; HB 1293 Modified provisions relating to sexual offenders (passed House; reported to Senate)

HB 1343 Establishes procedures for a violent offender registry, which will include any person on probation or parole for first or second degree murder (we oppose)

HB 1638 Modifies provisions relating to the concealed carrying of firearms (17 pages, referred to General Laws 2/13/20; 5 sponsors)

HB 1645 Requires the cost of incarceration to be considered during sentencing and parole hearings (Windham, read 2x)

HB 1756 Modifies provisions relating to murder in the first degree for those with serious mental illness (Hannegan, read 2x)

HB 1780 Allows Voting for those on probation or parole (Aldridge—referred to Elections Committee)

HB 1813 Establishes a "Terrorist Offender Registry" (Moon, read 2x) (we oppose)

HB 1837 -- allows a prisoner receiving MO HealthNet benefits at time of incarceration to have those benefits temporarily suspended, then restored upon release. (Green)

HB 1899 – Prison Canteen Funds; Committee Action: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Corrections and Public Institutions by a vote of 10 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules; Sponsors: Henderson; Hanson

HB 2034 Authorizes the early parole of some offenders over age 65. (Hannegan; to Rules 2/20)

HB 2119 Requires that MDOC provide certain assistance to offenders upon release (driver or non-driver license, SNAP app, public transportation benefits), Green, read 2x

HB 2141 Fresh Start Act (Grier) 3/5/20 House voted Do Pass

HB 2166 Prohibits a Missouri state court from prosecuting an offense in which there was a federal conviction for the same offense. (Neely, read 2x)

HB 2197 Expands a Warden's authority to recommend good time credit to include any prisoner not convicted of 1st or 2nd degree murder. (Dogan, read 2x)

HB 2201 Requires early parole hearings for persons who were under 18 at the time of an offense, and who were sentenced to more than 15 years imprisonment. (Schroer, Judiciary)

HB 2254 allows those with LWOP to seek a parole hearing after 25 years under certain circumstances. (Neely read 2x)

HB 2330 allows reduction of 85% to 50% for first felony incarceration (Price, read 2x)

HB 2331 provides for good time up to 10 days per month, up to 4 months per year (Price, read 2x)

HB 2332 >30 years, if first felony incarceration, parole board must review case history and report to Governor on possible clemency (Price, read 2x)

HB 2333 reduce 85% to 50%—tiered according to # of previous commitments (Price, read 2x)

See *Bills* page 8

From Michelle Smith:

Criminal Injustice and Black History Month

With February being legislated as the official time to recognize and celebrate the contributions and accomplishments of Black people, despite constant challenges and overwhelming obstacles, I feel compelled to speak on Black History Month through the lens of the Criminal (In)Justice system.

Black people have (and do) suffer in several respects within the legal systems of this nation and others. Despite this, their determination for freedom and yearn for liberation propel them to continue their struggles, creating history that future generations can be proud of as well as examples to be followed.

I recently finished reading "The War Before", a collection of the writings of Safiya Bukhari, who was a very influential leader within the Black Panther Party's New York chapter. Although Safiya is not as publicly recognized as other women in the Party, she was pivotal in the day to day running and organizing of the Panthers' New York office. After serving time in prison herself, she later founded The Jericho Movement, which was dedicated to supporting political prisoners who were largely forgotten about once the turbulent days of the civil rights and black power movements had dissipated. Safiya's book reminded me of how Black people have been victimized via unfounded and exaggerated criminal accusations simply because they dared to challenge the subjugated status of Black and poor people within society, as well as how our humanity is disregarded when those who commit crimes and atrocities against Black people go unpunished - and even rewarded.

People like Geronimo Pratt, Khalif Browder, George Stinney, and The Central Park Five come to my mind when I reflect on the countless Black people

wrongly convicted or unjustly incarcerated by a system that failed to value their humanity and only viewed them as disposable. In these injustices I am disgusted by the reality that law enforcers, prosecutors, judges and other officials responsible for such injustice received promotions and further stability in their positions. I often cringe at the fact that very few wrongly imprisoned and convicted people ever receive a modicum of justice. I have personally met men exonerated after serving



Safiya Bukhari (1950-2003)

two, three and four decades in prison, who didn't receive anything as much as an apology, let alone recompense for their suffering. Then there are those like Fred Hampton Sr.; the girls murdered in the Birmingham church bombing; Medgar Evers; and the murdered Freedom Riders... those who lost their lives because others in positions of power and privilege feared the loss of their societal advantages. They chose to use violence against Black communities to instill trepidation, and that violence went unpunished; making it very apparent that Black people were unworthy of legal defense, protection or justice, that "Black Lives" did not matter.

And in spite of all of the violence in the forms of murder, assault, and rape, as well as wrongful and unjust imprisonment and financial reprisals, Black people here and the world over have persisted. History

was (and is) made by their continuing to challenge the systems of oppression via speaking out, standing firm, and teaching the principles of unity, support, and oneness. The latter sentiment translates to 'Ubuntu' which means "I am because we are" in a Bantu dialect. We all honor and remember the sacrifices of—and injustices levied against—notables like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Muhammad Ali, and Rosa Parks. However, the 'regular' people who were assaulted, jailed, and otherwise retaliated against during the civil rights and black power protests, marches, sit-ins, boycotts, and attempts to gain voting rights simultaneously made history and made future generations proud. Countless Black people, both known and unknown, risked their physical freedoms and very lives to confront imbedded systems of inhumanity and injustice. And currently, there are still Black people advocating, fighting, learning from the past, and challenging the status quo. Black history continues to be made today. We are still proving, even to ourselves, that Black lives, do, in fact, matter.

Happy Black History Month.

Editor's note: I had the honor to meet Safiya Bukhari back in the 80s in Chicago during an event sponsored by the Committee to End the Marion Lockdown (CEML). I was working with CEML at the time, and Safiyah had come from New York to speak, along with other political prisoners, including a man named Dhoruba who was permanently injured but survived Attica.

Safiya and I were speaking about the price of rent in New York. When I mentioned how much I was paying for rent (which at the time was \$275.00 per month), she looked at me dumbfounded and said, "I could commute!" ♦

Bills from page 7

HB 2361 Creates civil cause of action allowing claimants to seek damages from the state for wrongful conviction. (Bosley, in Judiciary)

Senate Bills

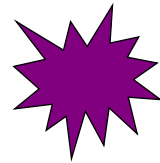
SB 538 like 600, Libia, ACA substitute (we oppose)

SB 542, SJR 61 Allows Voting while on Probation & Parole except for dangerous felons (Nasheed, both passed Judiciary)

SB 600 (omnibus) Modifies provisions relating to dangerous felonies (Luetkemeyer), passed Senate, heard in House 2/20, perfected (we oppose)

SB 696 requires DNA to be collected upon arrest for felony (Sifton, on calendar for Perfection 3/9/20) (we oppose) ♦

Winter Activities



December 2019

- 13 STL CURE Meeting follows Special Meeting to vote on Merger; pot luck
- 17 Hedy fell on ice, fractured 3 bones in her face
- 31 Get-together at Angie's house (Denise Ward-Brown, Cecelia Nadal, Angie and Hedy (discussed joint work)

January 2020

- 4 Ronnie picked up CURE mail; met with Hedy
- 5 Grant Committee meeting (Bill, Angie and Hedy)
- 12 ACLU celebrates 100 years with Big Bash at Washington University
- 14 Close the Workhouse press conference at STL City Hall (Angie)
- 14 Solidarity event for Kim Gardner at Harris-Stowe University (Angie)
- 15 Martin Luther King Day
- 20 KC CURE Meeting
- 23 Capitol Rally with J4I (Angie, Shelby Day, Denise Ward-Brown, Renese, James Shelby, Wazir)
- 24 STL CURE Meeting
- 25 Organization for Black Struggle's 40th Anniversary Celebration at Machinists Hall, STL (Shirley Sutton, Shirley Miner, Sharon Pace, Malik Sellassie, Angie, Ronnie Amiyn, Tacuma, Cornell Jackson El, Keith and Hedy)
- 28 Empower Missouri Advocacy (Lobby) Day
- 29 STL City Public Safety Committee/testimony from Close the Workhouse campaign (Angie)

February 2020

- 8 Kim Gardner holds first monthly Criminal Justice Reform Roundtable (Angie, Ronnie Amiyn)
- 9 Missouri CURE's merger with H.E.L.P. completed
- 12 ACLU Voices of Liberty Lobby Day
- 15 Angie & Hedy interviewed on Justice Beat
- 17 KCMO CURE Meeting; outreach committee formed to build for 2020 Conference in Kansas City
- 20 PCC Black History celebration (Angie & John Bowman of STL County NAACP arrived too late, but discussed future cooperation between Missouri CURE and STL County NAACP)
- 21 Phone interview with Washington University Law School's First Amendment Clinic (Keith, Hedy)
- 25 Community Engagement Meeting at Mizzou: Urban Institute, University Researchers, DOC, and Missouri CURE (Keith, Hedy)
- 28 STL CURE Meeting
- 29 Hermann MO's first Black History Month celebration (Cecelia Nadal, Angie, Keith, Hedy) ♦



Pride from page 1

we have not been successful.”

She noted that a year of diversion is 95% cheaper than a year in jail.

“We have just as many deaths from opioids as murders. And that’s not being addressed.” Diversion participants receive trauma-informed counseling.

Gardner’s Victim Services Unit has touched over four thousand people.

She partners with SLATE to offer job training and with other agencies to offer general healthcare needs. “Being a prosecutor and a nurse, I understand those root causes of how we address the criminal justice system,” said Gardner. “It’s the failed systems of healthcare, failed systems of education, economics—and that field drives the criminal justice system. If a person is committing crimes because they have a mental health crisis, and we’re thinking locking up someone is going to help them with this crisis, it doesn’t.”

On December 10, the Organization for Black Struggle and Color of Change organized a demonstration outside the Downtown St. Louis office of Attorney General Eric Schmitt. At least 30 community leaders and residents—including recently exonerated Ricky Kidd—delivered 25,000 petitions to Schmitt’s office demanding that he stop trying to block a new trial for Lamar Johnson.

Back in Feb 2018 Gardner had obtained a grand jury indictment against then-Governor Eric Greitens for felony invasion of privacy. Attorney General Josh Hawley declined to prosecute. In May 2018, a judge ruled Gardner could be called to testify. Gardner dismissed the

charges, as she could not testify in a case she was prosecuting. After Greitens resigned as Missouri Governor, Gardner dropped the charges.

In January 2020, Gardner filed a 33-page lawsuit, using the Ku Klux Klan Act, against the City of St. Louis, the St. Louis Police Officers Association, the police union spokesman Jeffrey Roorda, retired police officer

sion at Harris-Stowe University January 14. The prosecutors spoke about reforms they have instituted. They also spoke of receiving death threats, lawsuits and attacks from legislators.

State’s Attorney Marilyn Mosby of Baltimore took office in 2015. Her reform efforts were met with attacks on her home and family, including publishing of her children’s pictures online.

“When it comes to the types of attacks against black women, the type of venom is very personal,” said Mosby.

Florida State’s attorney Aramis Ayala said, “A public official said I should be lynched on Facebook. This is the stuff that we have to endure that is much different than any white female, any white male, any black male.” Speaking of the panel, she said, “The camaraderie, the sister-

hood that you see is because the level of strength and the level of attack is higher.”

Other prosecutors on the panel hailed from Boston, California, Maryland and Virginia. Gardner was “choked up” by having her “sister warriors” come to St. Louis to support her.

“We’re fighting for equality in the criminal justice system,” she said to the full-house audience at Harris-Stowe, “fighting for young people who are dying in our respective communities—though people want to use them as examples of how we aren’t doing our jobs.”

While black reform female prosecutors face “unthinkable challenges, unthinkable attacks,” Gardner said they are **not** victims.

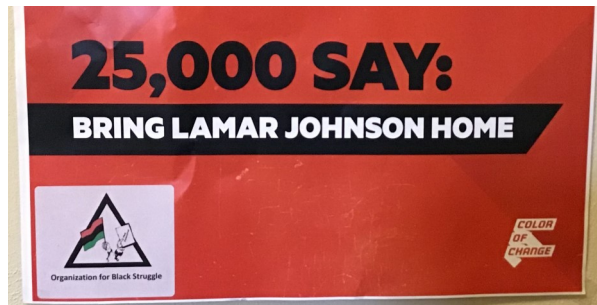
“We’re saying, ‘No longer are we going to sit here and let the powerful get together and choose to take out the people’s voice,’” Gardner said. “We stand together. This is not just about criminal justice reform. This is a new civil rights movement.”

At the December 10 demonstration at Eric Schmitt’s office, members of the coalition spoke repeatedly about Gardner and her Conviction Integrity Unit.

“We have to rally behind Kim Gardner, a prosecutor who understands the JUST in justice,” said Ricky Kidd.

“We can’t fail such a critical test at a time where history will record how we respond.”

Thanks to the St. Louis American for much of the information for this article. ♦



Charles Lane, and Special Prosecutor Gerard Carmody as well as his children/employees Patrick and Ryan Carmody.

She charged a “broad campaign of collusive conduct” seeking to get her out of office before she can implement her progressive agenda. This includes the “unprecedented appointment of a white ethically-conflicted special prosecutor to investigate the activities of Gardner’s office and a patently overbroad and unconstitutional ransacking of the office’s electronic files.”

Meanwhile, Gardner’s efforts to get a new trial for Lamar Johnson were supported by 30 reform-minded prosecutors around the country.

At the height of the attacks on Gardner, six black women reform prosecutors from around the U.S. came to St. Louis to show support and spoke at a panel discus-

Lamar Johnson Update

Lamar Johnson’s chances for freedom and justice now lay in the hands of the Missouri Supreme Court. After Gardner’s bid for a new trial was dismissed by the trial judge claiming it lacked procedural authority to hear it, the case went to appellate court, which also dismissed it for the same reason. However, in an 11-page opinion, the appeals court challenged the Missouri Supreme Court and the Missouri legislature to provide avenues for future cases of this type. It outlined for the legislature the kind of statute that can be passed that would give the court standing in future cases raised by a Conviction Integrity Unit. MO’s Supreme Court was given the opportunity—and the challenge—to make history. It could decide whether and to what extent an elected prosecutor has a duty to correct wrongful convictions in her jurisdiction and whether and to what extent there should be a mechanism for an elected prosecutor to exercise that duty. Legal observers believe this would be essential to preserve faith in the criminal justice system where there is a plausible claim by a new prosecutor that a previously convicted person is actually innocent.

Proposed Bill from Lonnie Lockhart-Bey:

HOUSE BILL _____, 2020

Section A. 558., RSMo, is amended by adding thereto one new section to be known as Section 558.500, to read as follows:

(1) Notwithstanding any other provisions of law, the County or City Prosecutor shall, upon petition, notify the Board of Probation and Parole that the Petitioner has served the required sentenced under this provision and is now eligible for parole consideration

(2) In accordance with section 558.019, RSMo, for purposes of parole eligibility, life is calculated at 30 years

(3) Effective immediately, any Offender convicted and sentenced under 565.020, RSMo, shall be eligible for parole consideration after serving a minimum of 30 years

(4) Herein, this section shall consider any consecutive time that exceeds the amount of 30 years to be considered as one sentence pursuant to section 565.020

(5) It shall be the duty of the Board of Probation and Parole to consider all of the following factors:

- (a) The amount of time served
- (b) Rehabilitative efforts, past and present
- (c) Mental Health Risks and treatment
- (d) Risk Factors
- (e) Vocational Training
- (f) Educational Training

(6) Should the Board of Probation and Parole release persons pursuant to this section, the board shall determine, based on the parolee's mental health needs, family support and public safety risks, to stipulate one or more of the following:

- 1. 6 months of mental health counseling, or not to exceed two years
- 2. 6 months monitoring, not to exceed two years, without a hearing
- 3. Transitional Housing: reentry centers, etc.
- 4. Job training, work assignments, community service

(7) Pursuant to this section, parolees shall, if deemed by the board of probation and parole, remain on lifetime supervision. ♦

A Word from Lonnie:

The above bill has been written with all parties considered, including the victims of crime, the offender, safety and security of the institution, Public Safety Risks and Cost Analysis.

Several legal minds and myself have formulated this bill. However, I believe it noteworthy to add further commentary as to why I believe it is necessary to put an end to draconian laws such as "the Other Death Penalty."

I have been incarcerated now for over twenty-five years, since the age of sixteen. Can you imagine being told that you would spend the remainder of your life in prison at such a young age? It was a culture shock to say the least! Nevertheless, with the help of God and the other "Condemned", I communicate this missive today of placid mind.

It was other men serving "the other death penalty" who guided me spiritually

through the "terror filled" days of plantation life, all those many years ago. It was they who taught me the value of knowledge and toiling hard for anything worth having.

Despite the circumstances, these condemned men saw fit to encourage a young, immature, hardheaded rascal to keep thinking, helping me understand that if I changed my thoughts I would eventually change who I was.

In 2012, the United States Supreme Court restored in me a sense of hope, that at some point in my journey had began to fade into the midnight of my caged reality.

Unfortunately, the restoration of my hopes and dreams did absolutely nothing for those men who gave me a sense of direction, encouraged me to dream in the first place, and moreso than anything, gave me the best of themselves.

Statistics indicate that 95% of all con-

victed felons at some point shall have an opportunity at parole, or at the very least, they will become parole eligible. However, the remaining 5%, those plastered in the media as irredeemable malefactors, are clearly being exploited throughout Missouri's Prison Industrial Complex.

Having had the opportunity to speak "Prison Reform" with the Director, Ms. Ann Precythe, I must say that I admire her courage to challenge "The Machine" known for its "warehousing" and the "exploitation" of its convicted thralls.

Does the "Prison Reform" philosophy believe in second chances? Is there a philanthropic motive attached to second chances? I wonder, because men like these are called on and trusted by Industry





Fight Mass Incarceration—and CURE the Madness!

Disclaimer: The articles in this newsletter are for informational purposes only. Nothing in this newsletter is intended to “promote, incite or advocate disorder or the violation of state or federal law, nor to promote, incite, advocate, facilitate or otherwise present a risk of lawlessness, violence, anarchy or rebellion against a government authority”...or any of the other ridiculous excuses that the Department of Corrections frequently uses to reject Turning Point, the newsletter of Missouri CURE, simply because they don’t want prisoners to have access to the information we are trying to provide.



Many thanks to the following people for their generous contributions: Earnest Langston, Earl Christine, Pauline Sullivan, Lamont Kemp, Fredrico Lowe-Bey, Roy Sanford, Steve Hoffman, Thomas Cunningham, the Merritt twins, Tawanda Kunonga, Michael Dalton and Dwayne

Jefferson. Once again, our deep gratitude to Carol Corey, our super-giver, for her continued contributions and support.

Lonnie from page 11

Administrators to teach a group of violent, rash and disorderly men how to be accountable for their actions, have empathy towards the victims of crime, and to take personal responsibility for their lives. I wonder, because such men are called on daily to take on various roles within this space.

Many of these men who are condemned to die behind a million dollar electric fence are held up as the "gold standard" of responsible behavior for those who are going home. Many of these men have proven themselves reliable, responsible and trustworthy. They have proven themselves to be rehabilitated, and most certainly have recognized the error of their ways. If these men are good enough to help heal a wounded populace, surely they are fit for another chance at life.



To render these men capable of freedom does not diminish the memory of victims or co-survivors of such vileness, nor does it say all wounds are healed. However, redemption is a story lived, not imagined. I can assure you that every waking moment of real change is spent in the nightmarish memory and regret of such a bad decision as to take another person's life. Sorry will never be enough to ease the pains of loss, and neither will "Forever."

So, I pose the same question that I asked the Director, "What does rehabilitation look like for a formerly violent Offender?" ♦

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- ☐ Lifetime **\$100.00**

*** or 5 stamps welcome if allowed.**

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Make checks payable to Missouri CURE.

Donations to Missouri CURE are gratefully accepted and will be used to benefit prisoners and their families and loved ones.